

The Introduction of South Korean Reality Shows in the Chinese Market

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Abstract

The Introduction of South Korean Reality Shows in the Chinese Market Danni Yang

It was not until 2000 that Chinese viewers had an opportunity to watch reality TV, a new genre of television programs. At that time, TV stations in China purchased the content of popular foreign reality shows and aired them nationally. Since then, China has entered the international format business and began to produce original reality shows. In 2004, *Super Girl*, in particular, got significant attention as well as huge popularity in Mainland China, which guided Chinese media professionals to find the potential of the reality television market in the country. However, due to a lack of originality, during the next few years, Chinese media companies and TV stations had no choice but to introduce foreign shows in order to attract viewers. As the market for western introduced reality shows became saturated, media professionals began to pay great attention to South Korean reality television which had mature market strategies, advanced production techniques, similar cultural elements and could be purchased more cheaply than western ones. But does the Chinese audience accept these programs? Do the shows affect the television market and society in China? The purpose of this study is to research the characteristics of the audience of South Korean introduced reality shows, the advantages and limitations of these shows, and the influence these shows have on viewers and television stations that carry them in China. Through a survey of 120 Chinese media consumers and an interview with a producer of reality programming concerning two South Korean introduced reality

shows, the market for South Korean reality television in China is analyzed from macro and micro perspectives. One more important goal of the research was to encourage Chinese media professionals to learn and create high quality original reality shows.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Television is one of the most important and powerful media of the twentieth century. Since John Logie Baird invented television in 1926, it has commanded the attention of our eyes, ears, fears and dreams, and developing to be the key storyteller in the contemporary industrialized world (Gary & Lotz, 2012). In China, television first went on the air in Beijing on May 1, 1958, broadcast to only about 30 TV sets in the national capital city. In the next two years, TV stations emerged in other major cities. TV sets became popular in China in the 1980s and spread into most households by the late 1990s (Cheng, 2005). Statistics reveal that by the end of 2013, the total number of households in China with television reached 375 million (Statistic Brain, 2014). There were 3240 television broadcast stations in total, ranking second worldwide (Encyclopedia of the Nation, 2014). It is also showed that Chinese viewers spent an average of 164 minutes watching TV every day per person in 2012 (Statista, 2014). Television, in China, has grown to be a window for Chinese viewers to know about their own country and the outside world (Chang, 2002).

According to Harold Lasswell, television, as one kind of mass medium, has four functions: (1) surveillance of the environment, (2) correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment, (3) transmission of social heritage from generation to generation, (4) entertainment (Baran & Davis, 2014). Based on these functions, TV shows can generally be divided into three categories: information programs,

educational programs and entertainment shows. For example, news programs and interviews belong to the first category, telling people important information about what is happening. Science programs are educational and focus on conveying knowledge to viewers. Entertainment programs are comedies, dramas, game shows or reality shows that make the audience happy and relaxed. In China, television is not only a platform for news and information, but is now also the single most popular source for family entertainment across the country (Cheng, 2005).

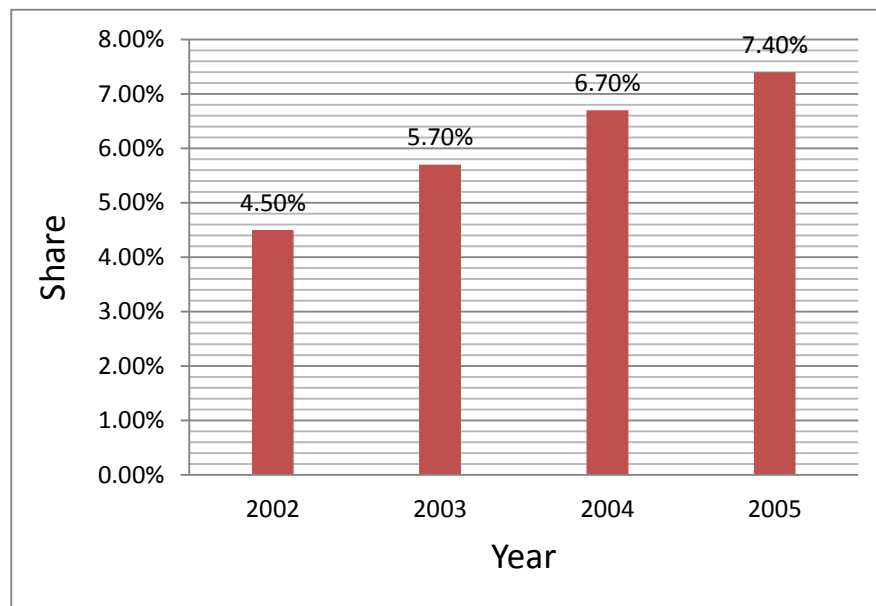
Reality TV is a hybrid of different types of shows. It adopts constructed situations, and is thus like a sitcom, based on a particular setting and featuring characters who cannot escape from it. Reality TV is like a documentary, as it uses a factual form to record human behavior and relationships. It is also like a drama because the show is based on a detailed exploration of characters' actions and behavior. It is regarded as a game show where the contestants usually compete to stay on the show for the final prize. It is seen as a talk show in being a means for reflecting on personal confession and social issues such as gender and social class. It can also be considered as lifestyle television, with an emphasis on changing the persona as well as showing changeable social relations (Bignell & Orlebar, 2005).

Reality TV exploded in the 1990s and 2000s (Hill, 2005). An upsurge of reality TV programming led to fierce competition in the television industry, transforming reality TV formats while making reality television shows highly saleable global

commodities (Kavka, 2012). In order to minimize the unpredictability of demand and to regularize revenue in the global arena, one business strategy was to sell a program concept or format rather than the program itself (Bielby & Harrington, 2008). Companies with bases in Western Europe played a critical role in boosting a rapid growth in the global TV formatting business in the 1990s (Murray & Ouellette, 2008). With huge inventories of game shows and reality TV formats in hand, these companies generated program ideas, sold concept rights, offered detailed production manuals, provided consultancy services, supplied computer software, and created graphics and set designs to aid licensors in localizing formats. In format sales, this kind of cross-cultural portability injects cultural specificity to give programs local favor. Additionally, this practice substantially reduces the costs incurred by sellers by decreasing the trial-and-error risk that comes with new television programs, while providing evidence of previous rating success to advertisers and a platform for attracting audiences (Moran, 1998). *Big Brother*, originally broadcast in the Netherlands from September to December 1999, was the first reality TV format to go truly global and the first format with enough elasticity to be localized to the cultural conditions of each broadcast setting (Roscoe, 2004). Within a year of its first broadcast season, the format had been sold to seven European broadcasters as well as to Channel 4 (UK) and CBS (US), gaining huge popularity (Kavka, 2012). By 2008, the show has been aired in over forty countries, making it one of the most successful franchises in television history (Hill & Palmer, 2002).

It was not until 2000 that Chinese viewers had an opportunity to watch foreign introduced reality shows on the screen. At that time, CCTV2 purchased the content of *Survivor* and aired it nationally (Qin, 2006). At that time, one critical problem in China's television industry was a lack of programming variety, which resulted primarily from a lack of professional TV program producers. Some media scholars warned that if domestic companies did not move quickly to explore the content-providing market soon enough, many viewers might seek entertainment elsewhere, most likely on the Internet, and more Western companies would make localized programs for Chinese audiences (China Daily, 2002). Fortunately, with China becoming more open to the West and World Trade Organization (WTO) entry in 2001, its TV entertainment industry began to face many new opportunities (Cheng, 2005). China entered the international format business; one such ambitious effort was the 2002 unlicensed adaptation of *Survivor* called *Into Shangri-La* (Keane, 2004). Chinese authorities eagerly supported TV that promoted an entrepreneurial business ethic to fuel rapid economic growth (Agence France Press, 2005). From 2002 to 2005, the share of entertainment shows among all television programs kept growing (See Figure 1). Since 2005, a number of hit talent shows have aired in China, including Shanghai Media Group's *My Show* and the men-only *My Hero*, CCTV's *Dream China*, and Hunan TV's women-only *Super Girl* (Yan, 2006). *Super Girl*, in particular, got significant attention as well as huge popularity in Mainland China. Since then, Chinese media professionals found the potential of reality television market in China and sped up the introduction of reality shows globally (Wang & Xia, 2007).

Figure 1
Share of Entertainment Shows 2002 to 2005



CSM, 2006

In addition to Western introduced reality shows, South Korean reality television has become a new hit genre in the Chinese market. In 2005 and 2006, Chinese media companies bought the content of two SBS (Seoul Broadcasting System) high-rated shows, *Love Letter* and *X-man*, which gained huge popularity and positive reactions. It was predicted that after the successful introduction of South Korean dramas, reality shows would grow to be a new highly competitive type of TV program appealing to the appetites of the Chinese audiences (Hunan TV, 2013). In 2013, Hunan TV purchased the format of MBC's (Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation) top singing reality show, *I am a Singer*. Upon broadcasting, it soon beat other entertainment programs and became one of the most popular television shows. This unparalleled success not only let Chinese viewers widely accept South Korean introduced reality

shows, but also indicated a new trend in television production through cooperation between two countries (Liu, 2014). Since then, more TV stations started to introduce different kinds of reality shows from South Korea. For example, Hubei TV cooperated with CJ E&M, a famous Korean entertainment company, to produce a singing contest program, *Super Star China*. Hunan TV bought the format of MBC's hot parent-child interactive reality show, *Where Are We Going, Dad?*. Sichuan TV also aired *Two Days One Night (Season 1)*, a Chinese version of KBS's (Korean Broadcasting System) tourism reality show, *Happy Sunday*. All of these shows were well received by viewers in China (Hunan TV, 2013). Among them, *Where Are We Going, Dad?*, in particular, was of great meaning because a focus on parent-child interaction turned out to be quite different from singing contest reality shows which occupied a dominant position on the screen at that time. The first season of the program aired from October 11, 2013 to December 13, 2013, with a total of twelve episodes. Similar to the original version, five celebrity fathers (singer Jimmy Lin, athlete Liang Tian, director Yuelun Wang, actor Tao Guo and model Liang Zhang) travelled with their offspring in rural areas in China for three days. There, by playing diverse games, they shared fresh life experiences and a warm family love. The second season launched on June 20, 2014, recording five new celebrity families (Director Lei Huang, actor Yi Lu, singer Gary Cao, athlete Wei Yang and actor Francis NG). Different from season one, season two added four more episodes and a half-hour special section as the final part of each episode about what happened behind the scenes, extending the program length from one and a half hour to two hours. Moreover, other celebrities, such as famous sports

announcer Jianxiang Huang and NBA star Ming Yao, were invited to participate in certain missions. The fresh and interesting theme quickly made it a top-rated show. The rating of nearly each episode of season one ranked first in the time slot (See Table 1), creating potential for other reality shows with similar emphasis to develop later (Chinanews, 2013).

Table 1
1st season ratings for *Where Are We Going, Dad?*

EP	Airdate	CSM46/48 City			CSM Nation		
		Rating	Share	Rank	Rating	Share	Rank
1	13/10/11	1.423	6.74	2	1.1	7.67	1
2	13/10/18	2.588	11.53	1	1.67	11.45	1
3	13/10/25	3.116	14.43	1	1.8	13.47	1
4	13/11/1	3.471	15.26	1	2.16	13.70	1
5	13/11/8	3.851	18.73	1	2.13	13.47	1
6	13/11/15	4.024	18.16	1	2.30	15.92	1
7	13/11/22	4.748	20.68	1	2.69	17.37	1
8	13/11/29	4.76	21.11	1	2.81	18.51	1
9	13/12/6	4.98	22.12	1	2.9	18.68	1
10	13/12/13	5.30	23.22	1	3.21	20.37	1
11	13/12/20	5.008	22.14	1	3.40	21.41	1
12	13/12/27	4.916	22.06	1	3.64	22.45	1

From CSM, 2013

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Chinese entertainment television started in the 1990s. Through over twenty years' development, entertainment programs have become one of the most popular television categories, bringing viewers humor and relaxation. Reality TV, as a new programming form, changed traditional entertainment television and stimulated the cultural industry (Tang & Xie, 2005).

Since 2006, China's TV stations have made great efforts in producing reality shows. However, compared with countries like the United States and the United Kingdom that have mature television systems, Chinese reality television was limited in creativity, production skills and industrial management (Chen & Xie, 2006). In order to satisfy viewers' increasing demands for entertainment television, TV stations decided to introduce hot reality shows from western countries. Those shows had huge success in China. However, in recent years, problems began to appear. Program homogenization, cultural barriers and internet shock all forced media companies and TV stations to seek new opportunities (Wang, 2011).

China and South Korea established official international relations on August 24, 1992. Since then, both countries have developed rapidly in economy, trade, investment, tourism and personnel exchanges (Liu & Meng, 2004). Especially, the cultural exchange between China and South Korea has become closer. Statistics showed that by the end of 2013, about 65,000 Chinese people go to South Korea to

study and live while 62,000 South Koreans come to China. Moreover, both countries ranked first in the number of cultural exchange personnel on each side (Huanqiu, 2014). It seems that Chinese and South Koreans are willing to promote their own cultures and learn from each other. In the entertainment industry, the Korean Wave has been gaining popularity in China since the 1990s. When global television co-production became a more common trend in the past few years, Chinese media professionals began to introduce reality shows from South Korea. Their efforts were rewarded. But, problems still exist concerning the shows' impact on viewers and the Chinese TV industry in the future.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Audience tastes are always changing. To reduce the risks and uncertainty when introducing foreign reality shows, media companies and TV stations need to adapt the products to a local favor as well as understand how audiences engage in, derive pleasures and construct meanings through aesthetic valuation (Bielby & Harrington, 2008). Thus, having an overall understanding of the audience guides media companies and TV stations to choose the right reality shows to introduce while controlling risks.

Because of a lack of originality in reality television, Chinese media companies and TV stations had no choice but to introduce foreign ones in order to attract viewers.

As the market of western introduced reality shows became saturated, media professionals began to pay great attention to South Korean reality television which had mature market strategies, advanced production skills, similar cultural elements and could be purchased more cheaply than western ones (Liu, 2014). To know well what factors make South Korean introduced reality shows successfully distinguished from other introduced or original ones, media companies are able to find market gaps and seek new opportunities.

Ratings are regarded as an important measurement of evaluating the success of a show. From a wider perspective, viewers and TV stations are also critical criteria. To explore the meaning and sustainability of South Korean introduced shows in China's market, it is critical to know the impact that these shows have on Chinese viewers and TV stations that carry them.

Through a survey and an interview concerning two South Korean introduced reality shows, the market for South Korean reality television in China is analyzed from macro and micro perspectives. One more important goal of the research is to encourage Chinese media professionals to learn and create high-qualified original reality shows.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the characteristics of the audience of South Korean introduced reality shows?
2. What factors make South Korean introduced reality shows popular in the Chinese market?
3. What are the major limitations of South Korean introduced reality shows?
4. What's the influence of South Korean introduced reality shows on viewers and TV stations that carry them in China?

1.5 Significance to the Field

The research summarizes the characteristics of the audience of South Korean introduced reality shows, analyzes the key factors and limitations behind the popularity of these shows in the Chinese market, and examines the impact the shows have on viewers and TV stations carrying them in China. In the long run, the creative cooperation between media companies in two countries will not only make the Chinese reality television develop well and become more competitive, but also help China to occupy a leading position in the global media industry.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Entertainment television, as a mix of entertaining, cognitive, aesthetic and educational elements, is immensely popular in modern society. Media professionals, as a result, have been making great efforts to explore and create new forms of it (Ao, 2013). At the beginning of the 2000s, media professionals recognized the promising future of reality shows and started to produce them. The successful launch of *Super Girl* in China in 2004 led to various new programs (Hu, 2006). These shows were not only a shortcut to realize common people's dreams but also a powerful weapon for TV stations to gain profits and reputation. That is the secret behind the popularity of reality programs (Chen & Xie, 2007). In 2010 and 2011, major Chinese TV stations purchased the copyrights of proven western reality shows to deal with a lack of creative programs in the domestic market (Xie, 2012). In the last two years, South Korean introduced reality shows, *I Am A Singer* and *Where Are We Going, Dad?*, soon conquered the Chinese audience (ifeng, 2013). Is it possible for South Korean introduced reality shows to own a steady position in China's TV market? If the answer is yes, what changes and adaptations were made to satisfy the Chinese audience's tastes as well as to be distinguishable from other original or introduced reality shows? What characteristics do the viewers have? And what is the impact of South Korean introduced reality shows on viewers and television stations that carry them.

This literature review addresses three areas related to the Chinese market for reality television, foreign introduced reality shows and The Korean Wave. The first section focuses on research about the entertainment and media market in China and the development of original reality programs. The second section addresses studies relevant to a reform in broadcast structure and western introduced reality shows. The last section summarizes research about the Korean Wave and its dissemination in the Chinese market.

2.2 Body of the Review

2.2.1 Reality Television in China

The global media and entertainment industry is a powerful business with vast opportunities for development. A PwC (Price Waterhouse Coopers) report (2012) indicates that Global Entertainment & Media spending rose 4.9 percent in 2011. Over the next five years, the number is estimated to increase from \$1.6 trillion in 2011 to \$2.1 trillion in 2016, a 5.7 percent compound annual increase. PwC also writes that there were 13 countries in 2011 whose total Entertainment & Media spending exceeded \$25 billion. Among them, China, with a total spending of \$100 billion, passed Germany to become the third largest Entertainment & Media market in the world. Moreover, of the leading countries, China will be the fastest growing with projected compound annual increases of 12.0 percent. It is also forecast that this industry will continue strong growth over the next five years. With a projected 11.6

percent compound annual increase, China's spending is likely to reach \$148 billion by 2015.

Entertainment television is one of the most important products of the modern television industry. Reality television, as a new genre, originally created by western countries, later spread worldwide and became quite popular. Chen (2007) states that the inevitable development of reality shows in the Chinese market can be attributed to three factors. First, the reform and opening-up policy in the 1990s had a great impact on China's political, economic, social and cultural development. When people lived in a stable social environment and had sufficient economic abilities to meet their physiological needs, they began to seek spiritual satisfaction. As a result, cultural consumption became one of the most direct demands. Reality shows, as a cultural product, provided people with the most economic and convenient way to consume culture and enjoy themselves. Second, market forces also led to the prosperous growth of reality television. TV stations were in fierce competition against each other to catch viewers' attention. Microsoft founder Bill Gates declared in 1996 that "Content is King" (Forbes, 2012). It was as true at that time as it is today. Therefore, a new type of program undoubtedly attracted media professionals' attention. Reality shows that major TV networks produced successfully appealed to the audiences' entertainment needs and helped networks to generate high advertising profits. In 2003 and 2004, Hunan TV and Guangdong TV were the two stations that made the most efforts in developing reality shows. Accordingly, their advertising revenues turned out to be the

first and second highest of all television stations in China (Yin, Ran, & Chen, 2006). Therefore, the decision to launch reality television was a necessary choice because it complied with market rules and met television stations' expectations of enhancing competitiveness. Third, reality television, regarded as a mix of documentary, game competition and talk show, had a direct influence on people's lives. The entertaining moments in the shows enabled audiences to forget unhappiness and relieve stress. A documentary style catered to people's natural desire for snooping. More important, this highly-interactive television format entirely changed the role of the audience. Instead of sitting in front of the television set, they had an opportunity to express opinions, show talent and realize dreams on the stage. All in all, it is certain that reality television would be part of the development of television in China (Chen, 2007).

Chinese reality television began in 2000 (Qin, 2006). As a new program format, reality shows experienced difficulty becoming accepted because of the differences in social structure, cultural tradition and viewing habits between China and western countries. The growth of reality television was inevitable. 2005 was a meaningful year since it was in that year that reality television developed at a rapid speed (Feng, 2009). Programs with an emphasis on auditions and folk stars experienced unexpected success, including *Super Girl*, *Dream China* and *My Show*. Meanwhile, career-style reality shows such as *The Winner* produced by SMG diversified the realm of reality television. Starting in 2006, major television stations began to launch various reality

shows and to fiercely compete against each other. Based on a large amount of research data, Tang and Xie (2006) identified four new trends in reality television, analyzed the impact that reality shows have on television stations, and revealed challenges producers faced in the development process. According to the study, compared with traditional entertainment programs, reality shows were well received by audiences due primarily to a national audition system. It was shown that reality programs accounted for 14% of all entertainment shows in 2005. However, the market share reached 30%, ranking first (CSM, 2006). Additionally, increasingly tougher competition forced television stations to speed up development of programs with new content. Limited in capital and social resources, independent production companies built a cooperative relationship with major television stations, becoming a link in the industry chain. Moreover, the industrialized operation of reality shows, such as releasing albums, holding concerts, and publishing books, stimulated the development of the cultural industry and domestic economy. Tang and Xie also note that excellent reality programs played a critical role in elevating the development of television stations by giving two examples. The huge success of *Super Girl* in 2005 helped Hunan TV to take fourth place in the market share of entertainment programs, which effectively compensated for its disadvantage in geographic location. SMG, originally owning many advantages in local economy, culture, resource integration and industrial operation, successfully expanded its market share in the China after launching *My Hero* and *My Show*. Tang and Xie (2006) also write that several problems were exposed in the development process. Resource decentralization,

immature operational concepts, program homogenization and poor production skills all restricted the growth of reality shows.

The PwC report reflects a growing trend of global and Chinese entertainment and media industry growth in the future. Studies conducted by Chen, Tang and Xie insist that reality television has every reason to develop in the Chinese television industry. However, immature Chinese television systems experienced several problems when producing reality shows, forcing media producers to focus on learning from developed countries and to slowly explore the genre.

2.2.2 Foreign Introduced Shows in the Chinese Television Market

The effort of introducing foreign reality shows closely relates to the reform in the Chinese broadcast structure, the separation of production of radio and television programs from their distribution. Due to a lack of quality programming, an unreasonable distribution system of television resources and a need for strong management, in 2009, SMG became the first producer to receive approval from SARFT (State Administration of Radio, Film and Television) to carry out the separation. Lv (2010) analyzed the background of the reform, summarized four modes of the separation mechanism, discussed the problems that may occur in the process, and further elaborated the opportunities and challenges in the Chinese television industry. The study offers two opinions about the definition of the separation of

production from distribution. One is to focus on a complete separation during the program production process. Instead of directly participating in the production, television stations just purchase, schedule and broadcast programs that have been produced by production companies. Another is for television and radio stations to authorize independent producers or production companies to produce parts of the shows. Regardless of the difference in interpreting the concept of separation of production from broadcasting, scholars state that both viewpoints stress the importance of market orientation. The reform is for the improvement of program quality, reduction of production costs, diversification of content, and change in the operational mechanism, creating a vigorous atmosphere, and altering the current mode of self-production and self-distribution. In addition to SMG, the reform was also conducted at Hunan TV, Zhejiang TV and Anhui TV in the same year. Lv also points out several potential problems that media professionals should pay attention to in the separation of production from distribution, including a clear definition of business assets, utilization and exploitation of channel resources, the mechanism of program examination and broadcasting, the reform and incentive of personnel systems, and the coexistence of affiliated TV stations and independent production companies.

For any industry, obstacles are unavoidable in their development process; Chinese reality television is no exception. Chen and Lv (2013) manifest the significance and long-term value of introducing foreign reality shows through purchasing copyrights and adapting them to local appetites, and to offer suggestions

to the problems that producers have to pay attention to in the localization process. They argue that the introduction of foreign programs is the most stable way for Chinese reality television to move forward. Original reality shows, in their current stage, are challenged in creating a production system and to generating long-term business value, not to mention brand expansion. Compared with copying existing shows, introducing successful ones from western countries brings a series of advantages. Foreign shows have undergone market testing, introducing them with lower risk and a higher operability. Additionally, Chinese media professionals are able to learn production procedures and the business value of reality television, which helps to improve production skills and operations methods efficiently in the short run, while shedding light on the further reform of the Chinese TV industry in the near future. Moreover, legally introduced reality shows effectively eliminate copyright risk and enhance their brand perception among the audience. The study further discusses suggestions for the introduction of foreign reality shows. First, buyers need to select the right programs to purchase. Specifically speaking, the shows should be creative, easily produced and cultural acceptable. Second, it is better to introduce diverse types of reality shows in addition to musical ones. Third, purchasers have to focus on market segmentation and take differentiated strategies. As a result, the competitiveness of introduced reality shows would increase. Lastly, it is important to seek breakthrough points when applying the separation of production from distribution in the Chinese TV industry. For example, the creator, producer and television station must invest together and share risks. Chen and Lv also analyzed

three key points that should be taken into account when making adjustments. Media professionals have to fully recognize the essential value of their shows and maintain it, choose the parts that can fill market gaps, and make appropriate changes to the content that will be more acceptable for local audience differences.

The two studies mentioned acknowledge that the current broadcast structure and industry realities all call for the introduction of foreign reality television. Despite the success of western introduced reality shows, media producers should also realize the potential problems and explore new opportunities.

2.2.3 The Korean Wave in the Chinese Market

The Korean Wave (“Hallyu” in Korean) refers to the immense popularity and widespread dissemination of South Korean culture around the world. It began in East Asia in the 1990s and continued more recently in the United States, Latin America, the Middle East, and parts of Europe (Kim, 2012). In China, the term was first coined in 1999 by the newspaper Beijing Youth Daily. Since then, it has been widely used to describe the boom of popular South Korean culture abroad (Lee, 2000).

Existing studies on the Korean Wave in East Asia are largely based on the theory of globalization which can be categorized as the political-economic, the cultural, and the social. According to Tuk (2012), in the 1990s, due to pressures from the super

powers and international organizations like the IMF (International Monetary Fund), most Asian countries opened their cultural markets to foreign importers. The 1997 Asia Financial crisis forced South Korea to further open its market for the sake of reforming its domestic economy. In the next year, the Kim Dae Jung administration turned to the high value-added cultural industry instead of heavily relying on manufacturing industries, making the cultural sector a primary focus for growth. Yang (2006) points out that cultural proximity became another factor behind the dissemination of the Korean Wave in East Asia because people are more inclined to accept imported cultural products that have something more in common with their own values, feelings or experiences than those that are culturally different. Cultural products, especially TV dramas, are compatible with traditional Confucian ethics and values attractive to audiences from East Asian countries, such as morality, loyalty, humility, and respect for family ties (Shin, 2006). Gans (1999) and Crane (2002) also emphasize the differentiation of cultural preferences and tastes even within a single society. From their perspectives, socio-economic status and demographic characteristics like age and gender determine the viewers' consumption behavior.

In China, the Korean Wave started with the export of dramas. In 1997, CCTV (China Central Television) broadcast a South Korean TV drama, *What Is Love All About?*, which achieved the second highest ratings for a soap opera in the history of Chinese television (Shim, 2006). This success has led to a sharp increase in the importation of Korean dramas. By 2000, there were at least 24 South Korean dramas

being aired on Chinese television. Most of them were romantic love stories and historical ones, which became big hits in the country (Lee, 2000). But, in the beginning of 2006, with an attempt to cool down the Korean Wave, the Chinese government limited the number of imported South Korean dramas allowed on television. Consequently, the total export revenue of South Korean dramas declined from 101.6 million USD to 85.9 million USD (People's Daily Online, 2007). However, this did not mean a loss of the Chinese viewers' love for South Korean dramas. Instead of watching on television, they could easily get access to various South Korean TV shows via video-sharing websites, including soap operas. China has grown to be one of the largest markets for the Korean Wave (The Economist, 2010).

Kim (2011) examines the factors behind the spread of the Korean Wave in China, by mainly discussing the dramas. In the 1990s, the media industry in China was liberalized due to the transformation from a centrally planned economy to a market economy. Since then, competition among television stations became increasingly intense. In order to gain competitiveness, they began to import foreign programs with low prices but high quality. South Korean dramas became one of the most suitable candidates. The cost was less than domestic programs, and in South Korea, fierce competition among the three largest broadcasting networks (KBS, SBS and MBC) caused high-qualified programs to emerge, including drama. Additionally, at that time, Deng's open door policy let the Chinese people be suddenly exposed to diverse cultural imports from the U.S., Japan and South Korea. However, because of its

violent and sexual content, American and Japanese cultural products failed to reach a wide range of audience in China. Moreover, driven by historical conflicts, older viewers showed a negative attitude toward American or Japanese culture. Nonetheless, the pop culture of South Korea was viewed as an alternative to the two dominant ones by wisely blending Western and Asian values, which made it more familiar and acceptable for Chinese viewers. South Korean dramas not only demonstrated traditional Chinese culture and Confucian values, but also depicted a positive representation of China by highlighting the regional dominance of Chinese dynasties in earlier centuries. Furthermore, the Chinese government viewed these dramas as ideologically safe ones.

Beginning in the second decade of the 21st century, the Korean Wave evolved into a new or second stage. According to Tuk (2012), the first stage was targeted to the Asian market in which South Korean drama played a chief role while the second stage was created for K-pop (South Korean pop music) with an attempt to promote globally. Today, K-pop is trying to conquer the three largest music markets in the world; the U.S, Japan and China. It was predicted by KOCIS (Korean Culture and Information Service) in 2011 that China would be the biggest market for K-pop within the next decade. Therefore, South Korean entertainment companies put an emphasis on the Chinese market and took specific strategies to cater to local flavor, including adding Chinese members to singing groups, releasing albums in Chinese versions, and forming sub groups of famous singing groups to debut in China. Tuk (2012) writes

that all of these efforts contributed to the great success of K-pop.

Kim (2011) also points out the challenges that the Korean Wave faces in China, including a political concern of weakening the official ideology and power structure, the so-called “Anti-hallyu movement” led by the nationalists, and a limited range of consumers. However, she claims that the Korean Wave would still continue to be strong. The fast development of the Internet and an increasing number of video-sharing websites make it much easier for the audience to get access to South Korean television programs in China. Additionally, the strong publicity of many South Korean cultural products provides a solid foundation for the long-term stability of the Korean Wave in the country. Furthermore, governments of the two countries attempt to promote a more balanced and consistent cultural exchange to resolve aggravated relations in recent years.

The studies by Tuk, Yang and Shin illustrate the dissemination of the Korean Wave in East Asia on the basis of the theory of globalization. The next three studies summarize a brief history of the first stage of the Korean Wave in China where South Korean dramas played a dominant role, while Kim’s research further explains the economic, cultural and social factors behind the popularity of these dramas in the Chinese market. In addition to dramas, the scholars view K-pop as a new essential part of the Korean Wave. Tuk stresses the efforts that South Korean Entertainment companies make to conquer the Chinese market. However, according to Kim, the

increasingly popular wave is still facing numerous challenges in China which need to be resolved. Fortunately, the innovation of technology, the existing publicity of South Korean cultural products, and governmental consensus on a balanced cultural exchange make the Korean Wave still full of energy.

2.3 Chapter Summary

The literature above relates to the Chinese market for reality television, foreign introduced reality shows and The Korean Wave. The future of media and entertainment in China is promising based on the PwC report. The development of reality shows is inevitable due social, market and audience factors. Original reality programs were a huge success in 2006, bringing benefits to TV stations, the domestic economy and the cultural industry. However, limited by resource decentralization, immature operational concepts, program homogenization and poor production skills, media professionals had no choice but to purchase the copyrights of successful western produced reality programs. The concept of separating production from distribution created an opportunity for television stations and independent production companies to build a flexible cooperation. Meanwhile, fast changing audience demand and challenges to media creators in the localization process forced them to seek new opportunities. An increase in the popularity of The Korean Wave in the Chinese market guides media professionals to think about introducing qualified South Korean reality programs with relatively lower costs.

Chapter Three: Methods

3.1 Introduction

The popularity of reality shows is sweeping the world. In almost any country, it has become the most competitive television genre when it comes to ratings (Xie, 2009). In 2000, a Chinese TV station bought the content of a western reality show, beginning a new age for the Chinese television industry. Since then, the development of reality shows in China has been viewed as a process of exploration and creation. During the first decade of the twenty-first century, media companies purchased the content of popular reality shows from overseas such as the United States, Holland and South Korea, and tried to produce original ones. However, both efforts faced bottlenecks like unavoidable cultural shock and a failure in forming long-term business value. To overcome these challenges, in 2010, a few TV stations began to introduce the successful formats of western reality shows, mainly talent shows, winning popularity and receiving positive comments (Song, 2012). In the next two years, more and more TV stations copied this mode creatively. As a result, little development space remained for western introduced reality shows while the viewers started to call for reality programs in new types. Since 2013, South Korean introduced formats of outdoor reality shows soon became new hits, in which celebrities were required to behave naturally in an unscripted situation and a mix of elements of entertainment, education and tourism were reflected (Zongyi Weekly, 2013).

The following research questions were included in this study:

1. What are the characteristics of the audience of South Korean introduced reality shows?
2. What factors make South Korean introduced reality shows popular in the Chinese market?
3. What are the major limitations of South Korean introduced reality shows?
4. What's the influence of South Korean introduced reality shows on viewers and TV stations that carry them in China?

This study was conducted through a survey and a telephone interview. The survey was around one popular and representative South Korean introduced reality show, *Where Are We Going, Dad?*, and was designed to further understand the characteristics of the audience of South Korean introduced reality shows, their opinions about the factors behind the popularity of the shows and the limitations, and about the impact those programs had on their lives. The survey included mostly quantitative questions with a few qualitative viewpoints. Demographic differentiation and crosstab analysis were used and the data were collected and analyzed by using descriptive and explanatory information. One telephone interview was conducted on December 16, 2014, with Bin Wu, a staff member in the Department of Operations Management at Dragon TV and the program manager of *Two Days One Night (Season 2)*. It aimed at revealing detailed information of introducing the show, its advantages and limitations, and the influence it had on Dragon TV. Meanwhile, Wu analyzed the market of South Korean introduced reality

shows and discussed the future landscape of reality shows in China's TV industry. All questions in the interviews were qualitative ones and the data were collected and analyzed in a descriptive and illustrative way.

3.2 Setting

The survey was conducted in China (including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan) through Sina Weibo (known as the Chinese Twitter). Based on a 2013 report about users of Sina Weibo (Weibo, 2013), young people between 19 and 35 are heavy users of this social platform, accounting for 90% of all users. Respondents who had access to Sina Weibo were able to participate in the survey. Similar and related surveys would be recommended to the participants as well.

3.3 Sample

Random sampling was applied in the procedure of this survey. There were no limitations to the demographic characteristics. A majority of respondents in this survey were young viewers who happened to be the target audiences of *Where Are We Going, Dad?*. However, viewers between 35 and 45, also regarded as target audiences of the program, and audiences in other age groups may be unable to reach the survey due to an infrequent use of Sina Weibo.

The respondents who took the survey were from multiple backgrounds. A total of

120 individuals took part in the online questionnaire. However, 85 of them were considered as valid participants. Among them, 82 answered the question about gender. The answer showed that 24 were male and 58 were female. Their age was divided into four domains, 2 were from age 12-18, 62 were from age 19-35, 15 were from age 36-49, and 6 were from age 50-65. Classifying by geographic area, those can be grouped into three; 54 came from South China, 29 from North China and 2 from other parts of China (Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan).

3.4 Measurement Instrument

A research-generated instrument was used to collect data. An online survey on the characteristics of the audience of *Where Are We Going, Dad?*, on the factors behind its popularity, and on the impact of the program on the viewers in China was sent out to understand South Korean introduced reality shows through the eyes of viewers in order to draw conclusions and make suggestions. Twenty-one questions were asked in the survey about basic information of the audience, their viewing habits, satisfaction and thoughts on the program's content, online interaction with the show, and personal preference for diverse kinds of reality shows. Results were reflected both in quantitative and qualitative ways and required a detailed analysis of the future development of South Korean introduced reality shows.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The online survey was pretested before distributing via Sina Weibo within a small group from September 2 to September 9, in order to make sure that all questions and answers designed were appropriate and sound. 25 respondents completed the survey and showed clear answers to each question. The results, however, might have a bias toward age since one week was not long enough for infrequent users to have access to the survey.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis

The online survey was sent out immediately through Sina Weibo after pretest. By sending out the Qualtrics links on Sina Weibo, the data collection period lasted one month, from September 11, 2014 to October 10, 2014. The collected information was grouped and transcribed in terms of themes. Specific survey questions were designed to match the three research questions. The qualitative answers had coding methods so that they were able to be interpreted and analyzed descriptively. The use of Qualtrics allowed the researcher to view the correlation between different results and to do crosstab analysis. The responses were shown in numbers, percentage, and citation. The results were reviewed as a group and then analyzed one by one.

Chapter Four: Results

4.1 Results of survey

Analysis of the survey revealed findings within the areas of the four research questions.

Since all of the four research questions were related to one South Korean introduced reality show called *Where Are We Going, Dad?*, the first question in the survey was designed to ask whether the respondents had watched the show or not. Their viewing experience was considered a prerequisite to get valid and reasonable answers to each research question and to make further discussions and conclusions. The result showed that 85 out of a total of 120 individuals (71%) who took part in the survey had watched the show before. These people were regarded as valid respondents and able to continue answering the remaining questions while the remaining 35 had no access to the following questions.

Eighty-two out of 85 valid respondents answered the question about gender. Among them, 24 were male while 58 were female. Women had a much higher percentage (71%) vs. men at 29%. It is not very surprising since females are generally considered to be heavy TV viewers (Feng, 2012). A total number of 85 individuals chose their age groups. According to the results, 2% were ages 12-18, 73% were ages 19-35, 18% were ages 36-49, and 7% were ages 50-65. The combination of the two findings demonstrates that young females are the major audience of the show. With

regard to the geographic location of the respondents, it is first necessary to clarify the geographic divisions of China. Based on a traditional division standard, south of the Qinling Mountains-Huaihe River Line is known as southern China while north of the line is called northern China. However, although Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan geographically belong to southern China, due to their political particularity, they are neither southern China nor northern China. The result showed that 64% came from South China, 34% from North China and 2% from other parts of China (Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan). Since Hunan TV is located in a southern province, and most of the celebrities come from southern China, it makes sense that people from the South feel more connected to the show. The following question asked about the educational background of the respondents. For those who are studying now, their answers indicate current educational level even if they have not accomplished the degree yet. However, if the respondents are working at present, they have to choose their highest educational level. 24% of the respondents chose master's or PhD degree. Respondents who answered bachelor's degree composed 60% while those who selected high school degree represented 15%. Only 1% showed the answer middle school degree. Based on the results, the audiences generally receive tertiary education. When asking about annual income, 21% presented that they earned less than 12,000 Yuan (US\$1,930) each year. This figure is not surprising because a certain proportion of the respondents are current students and they have not started earning money. The percentages of the respondents whose annual income was between 12,000 Yuan and 36,000 Yuan (US\$ 5,791), between 36,000 Yuan and 60,000 Yuan (US\$ 9,652),

between 60,000 Yuan and 96,000 Yuan (US\$15,443), between 96,000 Yuan and 144,000 Yuan (US\$ 23,164) were 15%, 32%, 22% and 6%, respectively. The remaining 4% exceeded US\$23,164. According to data from World Bank Organization (2014), in 2013, the gross national income per capita of China was US\$ 6,560. Based on this number, a majority of the viewers have a stable economic basis and therefore, can meet the needs of the advertisers. Finally, among 85 respondents, 41% were married. 34% were parents while 66% had no offspring. This result is somewhat unexpected because such a parent-child interaction reality show becomes more attractive to viewers who have no children. One possible reason might be the fresh and educational content conveyed by the show.

To summarize, like any other entertainment program, the audience of South Korean introduced reality shows vary in many aspects, including gender, age, geography, educational level, economic status and marital situation. A majority of them are young females age 19-35 who come from South China. They receive tertiary education and have a stable economic basis. Although the married and single audience is balanced, most of them have no offspring now and show stronger than expected interest in parent-child interaction shows.

The following two questions were intended to collect data about the audience's viewing frequency and viewing method. The results found that 47% of the respondents watched the show every week. They could be considered to be a loyal

audience. 13% demonstrated that they usually watched it while 31% chose sometimes. The remaining 9% watched only once or twice. The respondents' viewing method varied from person to person. Data showed that 51 out of 83 (62%) used one method to watch *Where Are We Going, Dad?* Among them, 22% chose TV live, 13% chose TV rerun, and 27% watched via the Internet. 17 used two methods to satisfy their viewing experience. Among these people, 3 chose TV live or TV rerun, 8 chose TV live or the Internet, and the rest used TV rerun or the Internet. There were still 15 out of 83 (18%) watching the show via all of the three methods mentioned.

In addition to these results, by creating cross-tabulation analysis, further findings were explored. 78% of the male respondents enjoyed using one way to watch the show and their preferences toward TV live, TV rerun and the Internet were even. For women, the Internet became the viewing method that they preferred the most. Respondents age 19-35 were inclined to use the Internet to watch while those age 36-49 preferred TV live and TV rerun. Respondents 50-65, were in favor of TV live. These results indicate that people's viewing methods vary by gender and age. For the young generation, Internet viewing completely dominates the traditional TV set. But, it does not mean that the TV set will be replaced by the Internet since the older audience still prefers watching shows on TV. Generally speaking, an unarguable fact that the use of the Internet will continually increase may alter future broadcasting possibilities and accommodate advertising strategies. Therefore, how to make the program content well balanced to the demands of both online viewers and advertisers

through a highly interactive platform is a significant issue for media managers to address.

The answer to Question number 11 showed the reason why people watched the show. A majority of the respondents watched it because they loved it. Accompanying family or friends was another important reason. The respondents also reflected that they watched it since they had nothing else to do. Four disagreed with any of the three reasons. But they did not show their thoughts, neither. Cross-tabulation analysis found that the reason varied by gender. 64% of the women watched the show because of their great love for it while over half of the men (54%) chose the option of accompanying family or friends. This adds more importance to creating content that attracts male audience's attention.

Question numbers 12 and 13 were regarding the popularity of the original version of the show as well as the Chinese viewers' interests in it. One-fifth of the respondents have already known and watched the original program before Hunan TV aired the Chinese version. 64% said that they had never watched it, even though they knew something about the program. The remaining 16% totally had no idea of it. This indicates that Chinese viewers are familiar with the original version to some extent. The survey also inquired about people's interests in the South Korean version after watching the Chinese one. Near half of them (47%) expressed that they would not watch it anyway. 27% hold great uncertainty. Since over 70% of the respondents show

little interest in the original version of the shows, it reflects that the audience's familiarity with these shows will not eventually lead to a desire to watch them.

The next question intended to collect data about people's online interaction with the show via Sina Weibo, a significant platform where the program and all the participants created their own accounts. Weibo users could follow them and interact, including commenting, reposting and liking messages sent by the program or the participants, reading and discussing topics around the show, and writing original messages about it.

Due to the high popularity of Season 1, Season 2 has attracted much wider domestic attention. Hunan TV (2014) claimed that the number of followers of the program's account exceeded 6 million at the end of Season 2. Meanwhile, the total number of the followers of the five celebrities reached 40 million. According to a report provided by the Weibo Data Center (2014), during the second season, reading and discussion volumes of the topics around the show were up to 20.29 billion and 220 million, respectively. This research, however, did not support these statements. 61% said that they did not follow any of the six accounts. Although roughly one-third (31%) followed those accounts, they had never interacted. The remaining 9% interacted at a very low frequency. One possible reason for the discrepancy may be uneven reading and discussion frequencies of Weibo users. In other words, the interactions between the audience and the show are not as hot as the data show. How to attract more users

to engage in interaction will be a considerable issue.

Question number 15 asked about the audience's satisfaction with the show. Over 90% of the respondents showed a positive and high satisfaction, which was balanced between female and male. 5 out of 85 had a neutral attitude towards the show. Only one person felt it was bad. The result reflects that South Korean introduced reality shows are well received by the Chinese audience.

Questions number 16 and 17 collected data about the factors behind the popularity of the show. In question number 16, the respondents were asked to rank five given factors on the basis of their personal preference. These factors covered the advantages of normal reality shows and the special attractive points of *Where Are We Going, Dad?*, which included creative program style, entertaining and educational program content, expression of reality, high production values, and famous participants. 81 respondents answered. According to the results, the most preferred factor was famous participants, followed by expression of reality, creative program style, entertaining and educational program content, and high production values. It appears that viewers are more interested in the celebrities and their normal life than in the program itself. The result also makes sense that people prefer high production values the least. Not being production professionals, the respondents in the survey have a limited understanding of television production. However, they are still able to have opinions.

In order to get more detailed information and further analyze research question 2, question number 17 asked the respondents to write down their own opinions on the factors that made the show popular. A variety of thoughts provided by 64 out of 85 were recorded, including the idea that no more attractive points existed except for the five factors mentioned. Among those answers, 17 said that the beautiful scenes and the cultural atmosphere of the shooting locations seemed to be attractive to them while another 9 people were interested in how celebrity parents lived, interacted with and educated their offspring. In addition to these two major opinions, other thoughts were also quoted. *“I began to reflect my own educational ways and behavior.” “How children reacted in the adversity attracted me a lot.” “The program became a topic when communicating with someone else.” “The program made me feel relaxed.” “I was attracted by the fashion style of the children.” “The subtitle and special effects were funny.” “There was no other interesting program during the time slot.” “The theme song was great.” “The story behind the scene and how celebrity parents cooked attracted me.”*

Each show has its limitations and needs for improvement. *Where Are We Going, Dad?* is no exception, even if five people participating in the survey considered it perfect under current conditions. Major limitations pointed out by the respondents included a lack of normal families in the show, poor quality copies of the original versions, an excessive amount of advertising, boring games, undue media hype, late

broadcast time, and editing that relied too much on personal preferences. In addition to these viewpoints, other voices were also heard. *“It is better to show more scenes behind the screen.” “5 families are not enough.” “Mothers can participate in as well.” “There is less interaction between fathers and children in Season 2.” “Please balance culture and entertainment.” “The program should pay attention to the growth of the children and the privacy of celebrities.” “A change can be made to the age of the children.” “Game is important. But the children are more important.” “Don’t focus too much on the effect of the show. We want to see the reality.” “The gap between two seasons is long.” “It is better to add more content about how the children grew up.” “Some of the games are too difficult for celebrities to finish.” “The program can choose recording places with more popularity.” “Parents and children can change and experience different interaction.”* These results lead to further discussions about South Korean introduced reality shows and shed light on suggestions for future improvement.

When asked about the impact that the show had on viewers, one-third said that they became more willing to take a trip, especially with family members. Another 32% learned useful educational methods after watching it. 10 respondents thought that the show reinforced their family relationship. Except for the three impacts, the show also enabled people to relieve stress from daily life and to broaden communication topics. However, answers that the program had no impact on life accounted for 21%. The data indicate that South Korean introduced reality shows do bring certain direct and

positive social influences on the audience.

To judge the influence that one show has on the TV station carrying it, an important measurement is to see whether the audiences become interested in other shows aired on this station. According to the survey results, a majority of the respondents (68%) showed an interest in other programs on Hunan TV. 15 out of 85 began to watch or pay attention to other shows after watching *Where Are We Going, Dad?*. The remaining 12 respondents only watched this show. It seems that the huge popularity and high ratings contribute little to other shows. However, as one of the most powerful television stations in China, nearly all of the shows broadcast on Hunan TV are of high quality and popular with the audience. As a result, the impacts that one show has on another may not be prominent. On the contrary, for television stations which produce or air few or no high-rated shows, if one program becomes a hit, the audience will be likely to pay attention to other ones.

The last question was regarding audience preferences for a number of different types of South Korean introduced reality shows, including parent-child interaction shows, game competition shows, talent shows, dating shows, and talk shows. The results indicated that parent-child interaction programs like *Where Are We Going, Dad?* achieved the highest popularity, followed by talent shows, game competition shows, and talk shows. Dating shows turned out to be the least favorite type. The findings help media managers to better understand audience appetites when introducing reality

shows in the future.

4.2 Results of interview

Happy Sunday, has aired on KBS (Korean Broadcasting System) since 2007, and has been one of the most popular and high-rated reality shows in South Korea. Attracted by its huge popularity, in 2013, Sichuan TV and two media companies (DYTM Corporation and China Science Publishing & Media Group Ltd.) co-introduced it and produced the Chinese version called *Two Days One Night (Season 1)*. Similar to the original, celebrities took trips to beautiful places in Sichuan Province and spent two days one night there. During this time period, they needed to play a series of games to win money, tents, transportation, and basic living necessities like food. By successfully mixing the elements of celebrities, games and tourism, the show was a big hit. More importantly, it enabled Sichuan TV to increase its competitiveness and improve its brand image. According to data from CMMR (2013), a market research company, before airing the show, the online reading and discussion volumes of the topic Sichuan TV ranked 15th among all stations in the country. However, after broadcasting it for one month, the ranking grew to 9th.

Realizing the huge potential of such a reality show, at the end of 2013, SMG and Jiatian Media negotiated with KBS and obtained the rights to introduce the second season of the show. According to Bin Wu, the program manager of *Two Days One*

Night (Season 2), the provisions of the contract between SMG and Jiatian Media clearly pointed out the role each company played in the production. Jiatian Media was responsible for producing the entire program while SMG offered highly-qualified production and promotion resources. The show aired during prime time on Saturday on Dragon TV, a powerful channel. Owned by SMG, Dragon TV broadcasts and produces top television programs, introduces popular foreign shows like *American Idol* and *America's Got Talent*, and has an audience of over 800 million (Dong, 2006). SMG created an overall promotion strategy for the show. For example, two famous entertainment shows called *Star Space* and *Entertainment Online* on Dragon TV added content from *Two Days One Night (Season 2)* each week, which included behind the scenes video and backstage interviews of the celebrities. Additionally, the highlights of *Two Days One Night (Season 2)* were repeatedly broadcast on several influential channels of SMG such as Channel Young, Entertainment Channel and Art-Culture Channel. The contract also entitled SMG to sell the advertising units independently. The advertising revenue was related to the ratings of the show. The higher the rating reached, the more advertising revenue the two companies could gain. Basically, SMG accounted for 70% of the total advertising revenue while Jiatian Media got the remaining 30%.

Wu also summarized three advantages of *Two Days One Night (Season 2)*. First, the program style was creative. The idea of six celebrities taking a series of usual trips not only provided the audience with an opportunity to snoop on celebrities, but also

provided relaxation and entertainment. Meanwhile, in the second season, the production team went to more representative places in China including the highest mountains, the most beautiful pools and the largest deserts, bringing an unparalleled visual impact to the audience as well as introducing local culture and customs in an interesting way. Generally speaking, a combination of celebrities, games, education and tourism enabled modern people to enjoy a relaxing time from the show and to better balance work and tourism in real life. Second, the six male celebrities whose age ranged from 27 to 58 came from different provinces in China. Their participation effectively attracted female viewers from wider demographics and age groups. Third, the production quality improved. For example, in order to fully record each detail in the trips, the production team, composed of nearly 200 Chinese and South Korean workers used 20 cameras to record both on the ground and in the air.

Obviously, various benefits were gained through cooperation between the Chinese and South Korean media companies. However, limitations still existed and seemed to be difficult to overcome. As Wu said, although cooperation perfectly solved the copyright problem, a number of serious issues around copyright appeared in the process. In fact, due to the political, economic, cultural and social differences between the two countries, the viewing habits of the audience varied as well. For instance, different from the South Korean viewers who enjoyed details and cared little about the storyline, Chinese audiences were interested in seeing how the story developed in a natural way. In this case, contradiction occurred between the two sides. In order to

better cater to local appetites, the Chinese media company tried to make adjustments. However, from the perspective of the South Korean producers, some of the changes were perceived to be copyright violations. Wu concluded that, after purchasing the format of a South Korean reality show, Chinese media companies need to respect copyright and use it legally. Then, they need to make reasonable adjustments to account for local favor. However, in real cooperation, the differences between China and South Korea would unavoidably challenge copyright protection and cause friction. Thus, how to wisely use the format would be a critical issue.

The introduction of South Korean reality shows is a new practice in the separation of production of Radio and television programs from their distribution, which had been the practice in China since 2009. In this process, television stations play different roles. Wu mentioned that, different from Hunan TV which authorized a media company (Hunan Golden Eagle Cartoon Co., Ltd) to assist in producing the show, SMG just bought a program produced by an independent company. Simply put, Hunan TV covered the production and promotion costs while SMG only paid the promotion expenses. Competition among television stations has grown to be considerably fierce, with cost savings becoming a key issue to improve competitiveness. To SMG, purchasing quality programs to air saved both production and labor costs. More importantly, the success and popularity of South Korean reality shows reduced the uncertainty of the ratings delivery of the syndicated version, which attracted more advertisers. Furthermore, the practice of introducing foreign shows

provided SMG with new ideas for the division of labor. Wu, as a program manager, took responsibility for promotion and communication with advertisers and the production company. However, risks still existed, with the biggest being the quality of the show. Since it was media companies that took control of the production, SMG would not be able to supervise the content or quality of the show. Once the show failed to meet the expectations of the audience or the advertisers, SMG had to take certain risks.

Finally, Wu praised the South Korean production teams for their strong executive abilities, originality, professional experience and a focus on details, which the Chinese media managers should learn from.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Reality television, as a hybrid of various kinds of shows, has taken a stable position in the global television industry. Unscripted talent shows, game shows, dating shows and other diverse shows can all be watched under the genre of reality TV. In China, reality programs entered a golden age in 2004; it was in this year that a talent show called *Super Girl* achieved significant success nationwide. Scholars demonstrate that the impact of this show is not limited to the television field. Instead, the social meaning turns out to be far-reaching (Yin, 2007). From 2004 to 2008, the Chinese media produced reality shows themselves, which made people more aware of the genre. Later, the introduction of reality television from western countries and South Korea provided viewers with opportunities to watch different program styles. Thanks to the fast development of technology, numerous foreign shows were uploaded on the video websites. The audience could easily get access to the programs that they were interested in (Beijing Business, 2012). Previous studies researched the status quo and future trend of China's reality television market, the current situation of foreign introduced reality shows, and different kinds of South Korean cultural products in China, helping later researchers to find new research questions that were ignored, to form different opinions, and to solve problems previously ignored.

The purpose of this study was to analyze the future market for South Korean introduced reality shows. Through a survey, the characteristics of the audience were

summarized, which guides media managers to choose the right programs to introduce. Attractive factors and limitations of the shows as well as their impacts on the audience and TV stations were also discussed in previous chapters. The findings not only pointed out the weaknesses to be dealt with, but also explored new opportunities that should be exploited. Based on the results, suggestions on the future development of South Korean introduced reality shows were made.

5.2 Discussion

After analyzing the data and opinions of the survey and the interview, there is a general idea of South Korean introduced reality shows at their current stage. By using SWOT analysis, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be concluded (Table 2).

Table 2
SWOT Analysis of South Korean Introduced Reality Shows

Strength: Stable audience base Creative program style Social meanings	Weakness: Lack of originality Too many ads
Opportunity: Potential huge market An increasing copyright awareness Other platforms	Threat: Competition Regulations and rules Changing audience taste

Future Recommendations for South Korean Introduced Reality Shows

(1) Seek an agreement on the copyright issue

In the past decade, copyright awareness has been enhanced in China, including the media industry. Data showed that the total number of pirated movies airing on TV in 2010 was reduced by half in 2006 (China.com, 2010). Media workers have realized that copyright protection equals revenue growth. In addition to several years' practice of introducing foreign shows, a standard procedure has been formed and thus, copyright will no longer be a an issue. However, new problems occur after successfully purchasing these shows. From the perspectives of South Korean media companies, they insist on the right to protect the copyright from being violated by the buyers. Instead of simply selling the format, in order to guarantee exact duplication of the original version, they influence the participants of the shows, engage in the entire

production process, and supervise the location shooting (China Daily, 2014). However, the Chinese insiders point out that buying a format can only be a basic step while making adjustments to satisfy local culture should be the most essential part (Entertainment 163, 2013). Per the interviewee, “When our media workers try to change the content that local audience has no interests in, the South Korean team prevents us from doing so with an explanation of copyright protection.” In this case, negotiation is one potential remedy. Through communication, the copyright needs to be respected, with reasonable adjustments; however, there is still a long way to go.

(2) Enhance the attractiveness of the content

On the condition that both sides have reached agreement on making necessary and reasonable adjustments to the shows, how to attract more viewers becomes another critical problem. Distinguished from other program types, reality television displays the real life of those people whom the viewers can't get access to and therefore, fulfills their curiosity. This interaction changes the audience's role from a bystander to a player. Meanwhile, the entertainment element relieves people from stress while the reflection of hot topics in society wakes up consonance and consideration (Sheng, 2013). The producer of any successful show knows the desire of its audience. Based on the survey results, the major viewers of South Korean introduced reality shows are targeted. Thus, more emphasis should be placed on the creation of content that caters to the female audience's appetites. Since Chinese viewers love storylines, editors need to pay attention to the plot of the stories and to

create emotional bonds. New elements, of interest to the younger generation should be added to the shows in time. Enhancing the attractiveness of these shows should not require the creation of false content. In some cases, however, it is difficult to ascertain reality because certain participants are able to express reality in a scripted way for the sake of meeting the viewers' expectations.

(3) Make use of other platforms

Today, new media is developing at a rapid pace, which complicates its relationship with traditional media, including television. They are competitors as well as partners. In addition to creating strong content, television stations should learn to make use of new media to expand the popularity of, and increase ratings for shows (Su, 2014). The survey reveals a high percentage of Internet usage to watch South Korean introduced reality shows. Moreover, new media also have promotional resources to offer, such as establishing blogs so that viewers can follow the show, have discussions, and interact. Additionally, social media enables viral communication in a short time period and therefore, is considered a highly effective platform to catch wide attention and reinforce audience loyalty. Unfortunately, results of the survey show an uneven interaction between the shows and the audience. How to attract more viewers to participate in the interaction becomes a considerable issue. Furthermore, the functions of mobile media are updating daily. In addition to watching videos or gathering information, various apps create endless possibilities.

(4) Explore new types

To satisfy the changing tastes of the audience, television is always exploring new program styles and production methods. In particular, for entertainment shows, the strong impact brought by the market and fast food culture unavoidably lead to copying. With more and more similar programs on the screen, homogenization is created (Guo, 2013). It is true that copying popular program styles saves development cost, reduces risks, and guarantees ratings. However, viewers' demands are diversified. In the long term, copying will result in fatigue, which wastes resources and weakens the competitiveness of media companies (Hou & Xie, 2013). The problem of homogenization also threatens South Korean introduced reality shows. The success of *Where Are We Going, Dad?* encouraged television stations to produce parent-child interaction programs. As the data showed, in 2014, there were 24 similar shows nationwide (Lou, 2014). Elements of celebrities, tourism and competition can be found in most reality shows. Although the survey presents a market for parent-child interaction, game competition and talent shows, new program styles still need to be explored.

5.3 Limitations

A failure to get access to the staff from *Where Are We Going, Dad?* accounted for a loss of a key interview, which was the first limitation of this study. In addition to the online survey, professional opinions from the program team should have been

gathered and thus increase the validity of the research. Another limitation was that the survey was conducted via the Internet. Even if it was a random sample, a demographic bias occurred because of a comparatively higher usage of the Internet by younger age groups. Finally, the data collection lasted approximately one month. It appeared adequate to get results; however, a longer period of time would generate higher validity.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The research emphasized an analysis of the Chinese market for South Korean introduced reality shows from the perspectives of the audience, the programs themselves, and the impacts these shows have on television stations that carry them. Unfortunately, other aspects worthy of exploration were not covered, such as economic values, advertising strategies, and managerial details.

Moreover, the practice of introducing successful formats of foreign reality shows highlights several problems relevant to Chinese reality television, which call for further research. Recently, Chinese producers have begun to attach importance to copyright issues, a positive development. However, at present, the country still lacks adequate experience to deal with problems that may occur. Because of different opinions on copyright law, China's television stations are challenged to make adjustments to original show formats. Therefore, more studies about the interpretation

and usage of copyright should be done for the future growth of reality television. Additionally, no reality show is absolutely real; subjective editing is one unavoidable reason. The economic attributes of the shows also discount reality. For the sake of attracting viewers and elevating ratings, more and more content in reality shows is pointed out as intentionally arranged, which eventually leads to a loss of audience who love to see real stories. Under these circumstances, the balance between either the popularity or the ratings of reality television and its essential element of reality should be researched. Finally, with an increase in the number of foreign introduced reality shows in China's TV market, how do originally created "Made in China" shows survive or develop? More attention should be paid to domestic reality television in such a competitive environment.

5.5 Conclusion

In the 15 year development of reality television in China, producers have experienced a great deal of practice. From the initial content purchase, they began to learn this new type of TV program. In this process, media companies accumulated certain experience and tried to produce it themselves. Unfortunately, a lack of originality and skill forced them to buy foreign formats and make adjustments. Successful western reality shows were introduced one by one in the past five years, which reenergized reality television and provided learning opportunities. However, the audience's interest in these shows decreased as time went by. As a result, popular

South Korean reality shows became the next choice. Lower introduction costs, highly-qualified production teams, and mild culture shock lured media companies to utilize these formats.

The introduction of South Korean reality shows has captured viewers' attention since 2013. The creative program style and meaningful social impact established a stable audience base. Meanwhile, the copyright issues have greatly improved. However, competition, regulations, and the audience's changing tastes add uncertainty, which calls for a precise adjustment to local favor and exploration of new platforms and program styles.

At the current stage, South Korean introduced reality shows are developing steadily in China. However, creation that can be bought is limited. Even for South Korean media companies, keeping originality is a difficult task. If ideas or formats become fewer and fewer, how can China's reality television survive? Thus, format buying is only a temporary remedy. In the long run, co-production and self-production will be the trend. Since advanced progress from the introduction of South Korean TV formats is being made, it is possible for media companies from both sides to work together to seek new program types, improve production skills, and share resources. All in all, the development of reality television in China will be an ongoing process of learning, cooperation, exploring, and creation. Prosperity in this arena will push the Chinese TV industry to a higher level in the world.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire on *Where Are We Going, Dad?* (A South Korean introduced reality show).

For the purpose of good research on *Where Are We Going, Dad?* and the future development of South Korean introduced reality shows, we sincerely ask you to spend a few minutes finishing this questionnaire. Anonymity will be obeyed. This is for a student thesis research at Drexel University. Your personal information will be well protected and not be released in any form. Please choose and write carefully. Thank you for your time and support.

Valid responses: 85

1. Have you ever watched *Where Are We Going, Dad?*?

Yes

No

If your answer is YES, please continue. Otherwise, please skip this question.

2. Gender

Male

Female

3. Age

12-18

19-35

36-49

50-65

65+

4. Where are you from?

South China

North China

Other areas (Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan)

5. What is your highest education level?

Elementary school

Middle school

High school

Undergraduate

Graduate or higher

6. What is your annual income? (USD)

Under 1,930
 1,930 – 5,791
 5,791 – 9,652
 9,652 – 15,443
 15,443 – 23,164
 Over 23,164

7. Are you married?

Yes
 No

8. Are you a parent?

Yes
 No

9. How often do you watch it?

Every week
 Usually
 Sometimes
 Only once or twice

10. What viewing method do you choose?

TV live only
 TV rerun only
 The Internet only
 All about the three
 TV live or TV rerun
 TV live or the Internet
 TV rerun or the Internet
 Others

11. Why do you choose to watch it? (multiple choices)

I watch because I like the program.
 I watch because my family or friends watch the program.
 I watch because I have nothing else to do.
 Others

12. Do you know it is a South Korean introduced program and have you ever watched the original version?

I knew and I have watched the original version.
 I knew but I have not watched the original version.
 I do not know.

13. Have you watched the original version of it after watching the Chinese

version?

Yes.

No but I will watch later.

No but I may watch later.

No and I won't watch anyway.

14. Have you followed the program and participants and interacted with them via social media (Sina Weibo)?

I have followed but never interacted with them.

I have followed and interacted with them quite often.

I have followed and interacted with them sometimes.

I have followed and interacted with them once or twice.

I have not followed any of them.

15. What do you think of the show?

Excellent

Good

Neutral

Not bad

Awful

16. Please rank the following five attractive points of the show. (1 is the most preferred, 5 is the least preferred)

Creative program style

Entertaining and educational program content

Expressing reality

Advanced production skills

Famous participants

17. In addition to the five mentioned in Question 16, please write down other points that attracted you.

18. Please write down any improvement that you think should be made to the show.

19. What's the impact this show has on your life? (Multiple choices)

Reinforcing family relationship

Learning useful education methods

Being more willing to take a trip (especially with family members)

Others

20. After watching it, have you been interested in other programs on Hunan TV?

I used to be interested in other programs on Hunan TV.

I have started to watch other programs on Hunan TV.

I have started to pay attention to other programs on Hunan TV.
I still only watch *Where are we going, Dad?*.

21. Please rank the following five types of reality shows. (1 is the most preferred, 5 is the least preferred)

Parent-child interaction show

Game competition show

Talent show

Dating show

Talk show

APPENDIX B

Interview questions for Bin Wu, staff at SMG (Shanghai Media Group) and the program manager of *Two Days One Night* (Season 2).

Question1: Does the broadcast of *Two Days One Night* (Season 2) affect the rating of other programs on Dragon TV or help the station to improve brand image?

Question2: What about the investment and profit of the program?

Question3: From your perspective, what is the importance of copyright?

Question4: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the separation of production from distribution?

Question5: What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of *Two Days One Night* (Season 2)?

Question6: The competition in today's television industry is considerably fierce. The update speed of reality programs becomes very fast. What do you think of the development space of South Korean introduced reality shows in China's TV market?

Question7: Dragon TV has introduced reality shows from both western countries and South Korea since 2008. What are the criteria when introducing these shows?

Question8: What can media workers learn from the practice of introducing reality shows from South Korea?